



HORIZONTAL or VERTICAL

When I was learning photography my mentor adamantly told me to only take photos in landscape - or the horizontal position. He never told me why, he simply said just do it and don't hold your camera vertically. For years afterward I did just this and it was easy to get stuck and take every photo with the camera held horizontally. Needless to say I missed some interesting photos and compositions by never turning my camera vertically. Additionally, I lost out on many sales to magazines because all magazines are laid out vertically.

Our brains are becoming more and more used to landscape (horizontal) format as a way of viewing photographs. This may be due to us looking at televisions, computer screens or movie screens for so long. Because of this, it is easy to forget that anything but landscape format exists. But by simply turning your camera 90 degrees, you can dramatically improve your image.

So, I am going to tell you to decide which is best for you. Our cameras are designed to be most comfortable held in a horizontal orientation, providing a nice grip to wrap your hand around so your other hand can operate the controls. So it stands to reason that many photographers will make far more horizontal images than vertical. Try turning your camera to get a vertical shot instead of horizontal. In fact, if you are not sure whether horizontal or vertical is best, try



both. Be prepared to turn your camera in whichever direction you need to turn it to make a great shot rather than a snapshot.

This is a very simple lesson that can make a huge impact on your photo composition. In the pages ahead, we will look at examples showing both the horizontal and vertical orientation so you will have a better understanding.

Included in the following pages are examples of a single scene. You will see the scene captured with a camera held horizontally (landscape) and vertically (portrait). Notice the difference in perspective but also notice how the story told in an image changes. No commentary is added as I believe the way you hold your camera is entirely a personal preference. It is up to you to decide which orientation creates the strongest photo composition.

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